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# SHARED

# VIEWS

News and Information  
 for the Communities of the  
 Bitterroot National Forest

Volume 1

Issue 2



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We welcome your questions,  
 feedback or ideas! Please  
 contact Ellen at 375.2609  
 or Cass at 363.7167  
 with your newsletter input.



## "COME OUT TO PLAY" ON YOUR NATIONAL FOREST

Various recreation opportunities abound on the 1.6 million acre Bitterroot National Forest, from fishing, hiking, and horseback riding to mountain biking and motorcycle riding. Bird and wildlife watching is also a favorite forest activity as is camping, rafting, and kayaking. The Anaconda-Pintler, Selway Bitterroot, and Frank Church River-Of-No-Return Wilderness areas provide the perfect opportunity to folks in search of a quiet and ultimate nature experience. The forest has 29 developed campgrounds and several other picnic areas, all of which offer a unique and beautiful setting. Lake Como located north of Darby has three campgrounds, with opportunities for hiking, fishing, swimming, and two day-use areas ideal for meeting up with friends for a great day outdoors.

Trails ranging from an easy to difficult hiking experience are scattered throughout the forest. Most are open to stock use and several trailheads have stock facilities. There are seven cabins available for rent from the different districts on the forest. These include a historic ranger's cabin and two lookout towers that offer spectacular views.

Finally, for those who want to take a ride and enjoy the beautiful scenery, the Skalkaho Highway (State Highway 38), travels through the forest and across the Sapphire Mountains highlighted by a beautiful waterfall cascading down the hillside near the road not far from Skalkaho Pass. Another scenic drive is the Magruder Corridor road. This is a 10.1-mile long road southwest of Darby that takes you through two spectacular wilderness areas, the Frank Church River-of-No-Return and Selway Bitterroot Wilderness. Travel in the Corridor opens up as soon as the snow melts which is sometime between late May to mid-June. The ride is slow along this narrow dirt road that leads all the way to Elk City, Idaho.

### For a safe and pleasurable outing remember the following:

- Extinguish all campfires completely—make sure ashes are cold before leaving
- Leave your recreation site looking like no one has been there so the next person can enjoy the natural beauty
- If you're in a burned area, be sure to keep a watchful eye out for fire weakened trees that can easily be blown over by winds, fallen rocks from hillsides, burned out stumps and roots creating unnoticeable holes, and remember burnt ground gets very slippery when wet

Do you know the name of our  
 "cover" flower? Answer on page 4.



## BURNED AREA RECOVERY DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

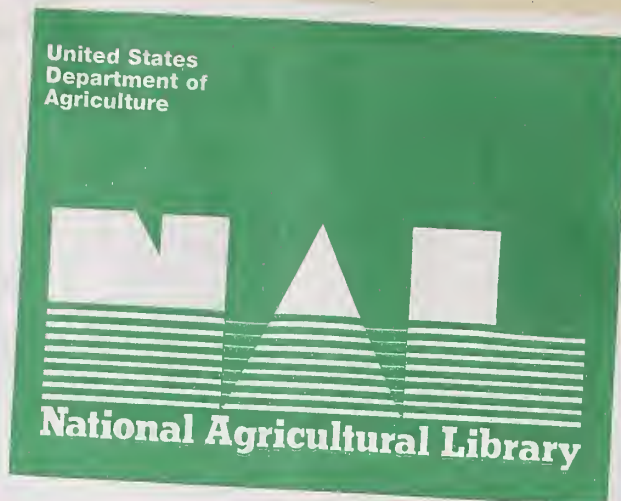
The Burned Area Recovery Draft Environmental Impact Statement is on schedule and available for public review. The document outlines five possible alternatives on how the Forest will manage the burned areas from last year's fires. Key priorities identified from the Post-fire Assessment and the public were used to help develop the alternatives. You can pick up a copy or a summary at any of our Forest offices.

Feb 2001	May 2001	Sept 2001	Oct 2001
Release proposal for review and comment	Release draft EIS for public review and comment (45 days)	Continue study, public comment period and edit draft of EIS	Release final EIS
Study comments writing draft EIS (30 days)			Begin work on accepted management decisions



HELP  
PROTECT  
BURNED  
AREAS

If you're heading out on your four-wheeler or motorcycle, don't forget the restriction in effect in the burned areas that allows travel on forest roads only. This restriction includes no vehicle travel on any trail within burned areas. The temporary closure will remain in effect until July 31, at which time it will be re-evaluated to determine if all or part of the closure will need to be extended to protect the area.



## WALK

wildflower hike this da Pietarinen, forest by Craig Odegard s along the Blodgett n used in a previous ett Fire last year, the ill be an opportunity other plants are able l has a gentle grade easy to walk along. participate can meet Supervisor's Office in Hamilton to carpool and be ready to leave by 9:30 am or meet at the Blodgett Overlook trailhead at 10:00 am. Folks will return to Hamilton in the mid-afternoon. Be sure to bring a sack lunch and wear appropriate clothing for the weather.

*For further information  
or directions to the trailhead,  
call 363-7100.*

## NOXIOUS WEEDS 2001

Noxious weeds are expected to expand their range under current post fire conditions. The fire established a seedbed and in some cases removed all of the vegetative competition. Areas that were relatively "clean" of noxious weeds are now susceptible to infestation.

Animals, vehicles, and foot traffic are all potential sources of spread into areas that were weed-free before the fires.

In 2001, several actions are being taken to help control or manage noxious weeds. An Environmental Impact Statement will be prepared that will address the noxious weed situation on a relatively large scale. 15 to 20,00 acres will be treated by chemical, mechanical, vegetation, and biological means, or a combination of several management schemes. Treatment will occur both inside and outside the burned area.

Extensive inventory and monitoring of new infestations and new invaders will be conducted this summer. Areas of vehicle concentration (drop points, helispots) and travel corridors used by fire personnel in 2000, will be the focus of this effort.

Herbicide application, and biological releases will continue to occur throughout the forest in 2001, where NEPA clearance is in place. Trails, roadside, and winter range are all areas where noxious weeds will be treated.



## MMMMM MUSHROOMS UPDATE!

The mushroom season has just started on the forest and it is too soon to tell what kind of season we will have. Some commercial harvesters have already shown up looking for mushrooms and are beginning to occupy camps that have been established for them, where garbage and sanitation is being provided.

Commercial permits and camping permits are available for purchase at the Darby Ranger Station from 8:00am - 4:30 pm each day, including weekends. Free-use permits for personal use are available at most gas stations in the Hamilton/Darby area and at all Bitterroot National Forest offices. As the weather warms up over the next several weeks, mushroom growth should increase and we can expect mushroom harvesting activity to be quite active for the next several weeks.

## IN APPRECIATION

"The fire came so close," said Clarence (Sparky) Green whose home is in the Blodgett Creek Area, "about a quarter of a mile in fact, to burning down my house."

Sparky Green is no stranger to fire. Last summer he and his wife Patricia were right in the middle of a huge firestorm that spread across the Bitterroot Valley. They were evacuated from their home for about three weeks.

Fortunately the fire was contained before it reached the Green home. Sparky, who uses his laundry room as a studio for his oil painting activities, is thankful for that. He has been painting since 1960. He loves to capture wildlife on his canvas and paints for his own enjoyment but also sells his artwork.

On May 14, 2001, Sparky and his daughter Lori Preston visited the Forest Service office in Hamilton and donated an oil painting of the infamous "elk bath" picture, taken last summer by John McColgan of the Alaska Type 1 Incident Management Team.

Sparky says he is very appreciative of the Forest Service for saving his house. "I am donating my oil painting to the Forest Service in appreciation for their fire fighting efforts during the summer of 2000 and for keeping the fire away from my home."

Thank you Sparky. The Bitterroot National Forest Service appreciates your contribution and generosity.

Sparky's oil painting is displayed in the lobby of the Supervisor's Office in Hamilton. We invite you to stop by and see Sparky's artistic talent for yourself!





## FIRES AND FENCING, INSECT & COMMUNITY RECOVERY

### State & Private Forestry Programs Role in Fire Recovery

#### Goals:

- Assist with individuals' and rural communities' recovery.
- Engage communities in developing solutions to minimize future catastrophic losses.
- Support community efforts to establish beneficial markets for raw materials resulting from fire killed timber and ecosystem restoration activities.

### State and Private Forestry Programs at Work

A little known group of programs within the Forest Service has the potential to provide meaningful support to non-industrial forest landowners and resource dependent rural communities here in the Bitterroot Valley.

These programs, collectively referred to as State and Private Forestry, provide financial and technical assistance to State & local governments, tribes, community organizations and landowners in an effort to maintain and improve America's forests and rural communities.

Through special congressional action, funds were made available to reimburse ranchers and private landowners for fire damaged fences. The Bitterroot National Forest is working with 47 landowners and the Farm Services Agency to assess—and make payments for—fence losses. These losses are estimated to reach nearly three quarters of a million dollars in the Bitterroot Valley alone.

Early in April, the Forest Service worked with MT Department of Natural Resources and Conservation and the Bitterroot Interagency Recovery Team (B.I.R.T.) to provide technical assistance and tools for private landowners who have concerns about post-fire insect infestations. For those who missed the early spring meetings, information is readily available in the form of two brochures—stop by our Forest or District offices to pick up a brochure if you need information about post-fire effects on either Ponderosa Pine or Douglas Fir.

In the near future, grants will be awarded to support community and economic development efforts in Ravalli County. Coordinated with community organizations and county or community governments, these grant funds are matched with local resources to accomplish a broad variety of projects that are identified as priorities by our local communities.



*If you're interested in getting more information about any of our State and Private Forestry programs, please call Nan Christianson at 363-7113.*

## PERSONNEL UPDATE

There's a lot of work ahead as we move through this recovery period. As a result, staffing on the Bitterroot National Forest has increased considerably from a year ago. Last year in June, there were 145 permanent employees. Our workforce today consists of 245 employees. Currently, eighteen percent or 44 of the new employees have been hired for a limited time period to support the existing Forest organization. These positions are necessary to meet the increased workload since last year's fires. As the workload decreases, the new employees will either be reassigned to new jobs within the Northern Region, return to their previous job, or their appointment will expire depending on the conditions they were hired under. There will be a further increase of our permanent workforce when we move into the implementation stage of our Burned Area Recovery Final Environmental Impact Statement.

Another factor to the increase of permanent employees is the hiring of additional employees to our fire organization. This is part of the national effort in meeting the "Most Efficient Level" (MEL) in our permanent fire-related workforce to strengthen the agency's ability to meet the demands of emergency and project work. The increase in permanent fire hires means there will not be a need to hire as many temporary fire positions this season.

Depending on the need and budget, there will be approximately 188 temporary positions hired for this year's field season.

Depending on the need and budget, there will be approximately 188 temporary positions hired for this year's field season. This includes temporary jobs related to inside the office and out on the Forest.

*For more information on temporary job positions contact the personnel department at 363-7123.*

### NEW DISTRICT RANGER

The Stevensville Ranger District will be under the leadership of a new district ranger beginning Monday, June 18, when we welcome Jeanne Higgins to the Bitterroot National Forest. Higgins is coming to us from the Richfield Ranger District of the Fishlake National Forest, Utah where she was the District Ranger and Forest Planning Officer.

Higgins has been with the Forest Service since 1988 and has worked as an environmental coordinator, fish, wildlife, and botany program manager, timber and operations manager, and ecosystem group leader. Higgins also holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Forest Resource Management from the University of Idaho. We are looking forward to the knowledge and experience Jeanne is bringing to our Forest.

**DID YOU KNOW THAT...** you must stay on existing roads and trails when travelling on a motorized wheeled vehicle on National Forest Systems Lands. Since the new national policy went into effect on January 5, 2001, you can no longer travel cross country. Signs notifying acceptable and non-acceptable use for Off Highway Vehicles (OHVs) will be posted on all National Forests by July 1.





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## JULY 4TH FIREWORKS

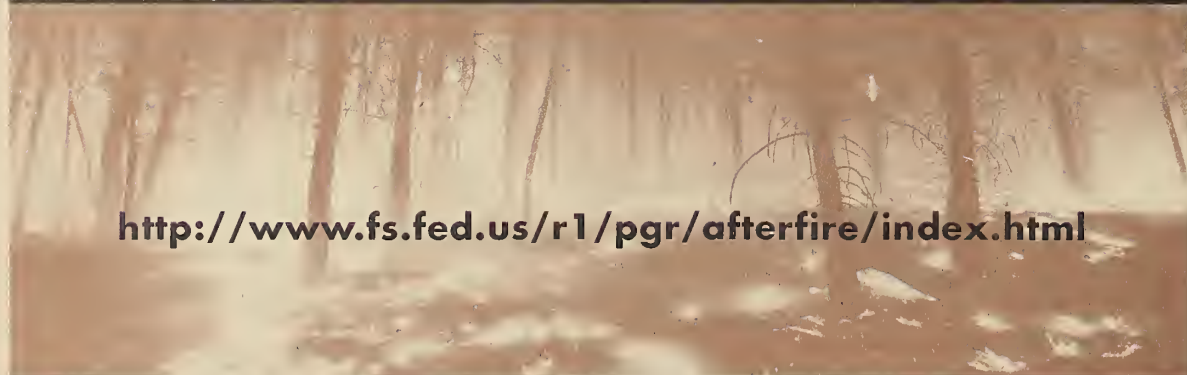
**J**Independence Day is not that far off. Don't forget that the use of fireworks is not allowed on National Forest Systems Lands. Help us protect our natural resources from unwanted wildland fires by leaving your fireworks at home.



Bitterroot National Forest  
1801 N. First Street  
Hamilton, MT 59840

Presorted Standard  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
Stevensville, MT  
Permit No.82

## A NEW WEBSITE



<http://www.fs.fed.us/r1/pgr/afterfire/index.html>

The Intermountain and Northern Regions of the Forest Service have a new website full of information about the fires of 2000 and the path towards recovery. You can log on to find out about the post-fire assessment, steps towards restoration and recovery, the National Fire Plan, and related links.

### Check out these other hot websites too:

Bitterroot National Forest [www.fs.fed.us/r1/bitterroot](http://www.fs.fed.us/r1/bitterroot)  
Lolo National Forest [www.fs.fed.us/r1/lolo](http://www.fs.fed.us/r1/lolo)  
Living with Fire [www.fs.fed.us/rm/fire\\_game](http://www.fs.fed.us/rm/fire_game)  
Firewise [www.firewise.org](http://www.firewise.org)



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Answer: "cover" photo flower:  
Small Yellow Lady's-slipper  
(*Cypripedium parviflorum*).  
It blooms normally in June  
and grows in lower elevation  
riparian areas or wetlands.  
Though the white version is not  
uncommon to our area, the  
Small Yellow is, and is listed as  
a sensitive specie. If you happen  
to spot one, please give our  
botanist a call at 363.7172